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CHAPTER THREE

GETTING FOOD

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261 For the Lepchas, as for almost all primitive peoples, by far the most important subject in their lives is food. Far and away the greatest part of their lives is centred round food-getting; it is impossible to over-stress its importance. But because food-getting is so constant a preoccupation, and because it is fairly featureless and uneventful, it nearly always, it seems to me, receives far less attention than it deserves. The features chiefly dealt with by ethnologists, including of course the greater part of this book, are those which take place during the primitive's leisure. Some peoples, I am aware, centre their social and religious life about food; 771 but this is not the case with the Lepchas. Food-products play a considerable rôle in the objects of sacrifice, but with the lamas this aspect is not stressed; most ceremonial objects are made out of grain-flour and butter, but this is because they are the most convenient and easily accessible materials; by the time they have been fashioned the edible qualities of these objects are not apparent. A minor sacrifice is made when a new field is taken into cultivation for the first time, and prayers are said, usually by a layman, after each sowing; and the Mun make elaborate ceremonies, to be described later, yearly at the flowering of the cardamum, and at the sowing and gathering of dry rice. In the annual cycle of lamaist ceremonies there are a certain number which are devoted to the protection of crops from hail and predatory beasts, and, before the sowing starts, some seed is collected from each household and given a communal blessing at a monastery service; but these rites take an insignificant place in the yearly sum of religious ceremonies. Lepcha religion is above all occupied with health.

261 Food does however play a very important rôle in the Lepchas' ● 152 emotional lives. Love, whether between spouses, friends, or parents and children, is considered to be the result of mutual

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benefits, and foremost among these mutual benefits is the gathering and preparation of food. For Lepchas love is never automatic; if they say they love a person they will always explain why they do so. Even with young children this attitude is firmly implanted; if you ask one if he loves his parents he will almost certainly reply 'I love my father and mother because they give me my food.' If you ask about their feelings towards other people they have visited the answer again is always in terms of what they were given to eat. Rigya, a young man of twenty-two, said of his parents 'I love them both very much, but especially my mother; when I was young they gave me food and clothes and looked after me; now in my turn I must look after them.' He has been fairly recently married and at first he and his wife did not get on at all well together: 'At first we could not even look at one another, but now we are good friends; when I go out to work and come back tired my wife has food ready for me and looks after me; then I love her and think to myself "this is my wife", and I am pleased in my belly.' It may be noted that the belly is considered to be the seat of the emotions.

All ceremonial occasions among the Lepchas—birth, marriage, and death, religious ceremonies, exorcisms, and civil consultations —are marked by the consumption of extra large quantities of food and drink. Even the most solemn religious ceremonies are turned into picnics. Important past events are often remembered in terms of what the participants had to eat on such occasions. When I tried to get some of the best-adjusted Lepchas to talk about their own early lives they replied by giving me lists of menus.

The Lepchas are practically omnivorous; the only animals that they do not eat which some other races do are cats and dogs, rats and mice, horses and snakes. They eat all wild animals that they can kill or find dead, and keep and eat oxen, goats, pigs and hens; they also eat a great variety of wild forest produce, chiefly tubers of different wild yams, and various leaves which are used as seasoning; both meat and vegetables are supplementary dishes which add a relish to the cultivated cereals.

As has already been said, in former times and still today in the less fertile regions, the Lepchas relied on hunting for a great deal of their food; but in Lingthem and most of the other villages of Zongu game is hunted less and less. There are a number of reasons for this which interact on one another; the stigma which the Lepcha interpretation of lamaism places on the killing of animals excludes

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754 supernatural qualities. The poison is meant to be a solid substance, but it does not act unless Hlatam has evil intentions towards the person to whom she gives it. Neither poison nor ill-will are sufficient by themselves; the combination of the two is necessary. The possession of this poison carries certain disadvantages; it cannot be got rid of, for then the supernatural attached to it would destroy the person who threw it away; and it is also necessary to employ it once ever so often or the supernatural will attack the possessor; if no external enemy is the victim it must be given to somebody in the owner's household.

Those who believe in the poison think that before she dies Hlatam will give the poison to her son Aga. If he were to proclaim her guilt during her life-time, people might trust him after her death; if however he says nothing they will fear him, even though he go through the gesture of throwing the poison into the water. Aga is almost the nastiest person in Lingthem; he has a squint and a sullen and leering expression, and is one of the few people on whom Lepchas are willing to pronounce moral judgements; two said of him vehemently that he was evil-minded. I considered him below average intelligence and somewhat malicious; it is possible that the universal fear and suspicion of his mother has rendered him surly and malevolent. Hlatam herself seemed a cheerful and rather bawdy-minded old lady, ever ready to joke; outside her own house people did not distinguish her in any way, but the majority said they were frightened to visit her and would not take food from her hands unless she tasted it first.

754 I personally do not believe in Hlatam's 'poisoning'; it reminds
● 152 me of the accusation of Mary Baker Eddy that her third husband was killed by 'arsenical poison mentally administered'.[8] At the same time it has seemed worth while to treat the subject fully for it is almost the only instance of suspected (and possibly repressed and transferred) aggression among the Lepchas. As will be seen later, all misfortunes, whatever their nature, are generally ascribed to the action of supernaturals, and even personal aggression is usually represented as being outside the aggressor's control. Hlatam has been converted into a sort of scape-goat; among Lepchas even motivated aggression is socially disapproved of; Hlatam is believed to exercise almost motiveless malevolence. In general theory her 'poison' is said to be useful for acquiring property and securing revenge; but in the case of her actual named victims there was no

[8] See *Mrs. Eddy* by E. F. Dakin. (London Scribner's 1929.) pp. 166–168, 227.

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property gain and no feud; at most somebody in the victim's family had at some time said something derogatory about Hlatam. Quarrelling is socially so strongly disapproved of that people of naturally aggressive temperament probably suffer from considerable psychological discomfort and get some relief from the thought of unrestrained aggression practised by somebody else. I have statements by nine people about Hlatam and her poison, for the subject was rather an uncomfortable one and could only be broached to people I knew well; the three most emphatic about her guilt were potentially aggressive in other ways; those who protested her innocence were themselves gentle. The motive of poison obtained from strangers—plainsmen or Nepali or Tibetans—crops up fairly often in anecdote and legend; but I never heard of the strong aconite arrow-poison, which nearly every man possesses, being employed for illegitimate purposes, though when men commit suicide they usually do so by taking it.

Theft is unusual; it practically never occurs from houses, which, if there is nobody at home, are usually padlocked; but this padlock is in point of fact more a social sign that the house is momentarily unoccupied, than a protection against possible entry. Sometimes indeed the padlock is fastened on to a thin loop of bamboo fibre which could be torn to pieces in the hand; and it would never be difficult to make an entry into a Lepcha house through the bamboo floor or walls. A few cases occurred about four years ago of cardamum fruit being stolen off the plants in the field, but there have been no instances of this in the last three years. If a theft is witnessed the robbed person goes and informs the Mandal who then consults with the *youmi*; then the Mandal and *youmi* go to the thief and try their utmost to persuade him to restore the stolen property; if he does so he is given a severe talking to and the incident is considered closed. Should he refuse, however, and should there be clear evidence against him, the matter would be reported to Gangtok; such a course is to be deplored and in fact has not occurred within recent years. If a child commits a theft the father has to insist on restitution and to give the child a severe beating as punishment.

To take even the smallest quantities of fruit or grain from other people's gardens or fields without obtaining permission is regarded as theft, and people would be ashamed of acting in this way, however hungry they might feel. A child who picked a fruit off a neighbour's tree would be severely punished.

There is no supernatural protection against thieves in the house

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614 835 situations inevitably lead to jealousy, fighting, and the splitting of the group. By their regulations the Lepchas have reduced intra-group aggression to the minimum. The potential rivalry between father and son is mitigated by taking the arrangements for the child's marriage entirely out of the parents' hands; the potential rivalry between brothers is mitigated by allowing the younger brother access to his more favoured and stronger elder brother's wife, while making the relationship between an elder brother and his younger sister-in-law strongly incestuous. In this connection it is [538] worth while noting that in the very large and elaborate Lepcha folk-lore and mythology I did not come upon a single instance of the otherwise almost universal compensatory story of the conflict between brothers, in which the despised, or ill-used younger brother or sister makes good after the elders have failed.

●152 There is no specific word for 'jealousy' in Lepcha. When I presented hypothetical jealous situations to Lepchas and asked them what their feelings would be, the greater number say they would be angry; but this word, *sak-lyak*, does not carry very strong emotional connotations; it is the word used by parents if their children are naughty, or by workmen if they come across an un-[195] expected difficulty in their work. It is also the most general euphemism for a sexual erection; I cannot untangle the associations which have produced this metaphor, but there is no question that the word is used in both senses; more than once I have heard a workman say when, for example, cords have got tangled 'I am as angry as a [831] standing penis.' Despite the one-directioned sex-words, sexual activity is never openly equated with aggression; it is generally believed that both sexes enjoy it equally, though a few people maintained that women enjoy it more; almost all were agreed that women enjoy it later in life than men do. On the other hand [832] point may be given to the metaphor by the fact that during copulation only the man is active; the woman lies completely passive and relaxed.

152 831 The Lepchas of Zongu have dissipated nearly all the highly-charged emotional feelings which in many other societies are centred around sex, and on the whole neither sexual activity nor jealousy are strong motivating factors in their lives. There are a few exceptions to this generalisation; the quarrels fostered by the outsider, Mrs. Jiroong, have already been described in Chapter Three; and married women who show marked preference even for perfectly hereditable spouses, and married men who show preference

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for women other than their wives produce and have produced many disquieting situations, sometimes leading to open disputes and even suicide.[10] Such disturbances can however be put down to uncontrollable personal temperaments, which go strongly against the Lepcha ideal of behaviour; the regulations of the Lepchas have been devised to reduce to a minimum the conflict and aggression within the group. This has not however been followed by added aggression to people outside the group; William Sumner's generalisation[11] does not hold good here, possibly because through the greater part of their history Lepchas have only had slight and intermittent contact with other groups. Practically all the aggression manifested by the Lepchas is directed against and is supposed to originate from hostile supernaturals. Historically Lepchas have nearly always answered outside aggression by retreating and hiding in the forest; and in the semi-historical stories which they recount about the invading Tibetans or Nepali or Bhutanese, the Lepchas get the better of their enemies, not by violence but by cunning—through cutting off the water supply, shooting fire into the fortress, blocking up mountain paths, and similar devices.

It is worth noting that the Lepchas who live in mixed communities, though they generally know of the theoretical right of access to potential spouses, all deny with great apparent sincerity that these rights are ever taken advantage of; many who have imbued the views of their neighbours the Tibetans or Nepali, regard them with horror. The Lepchas of Zongu themselves are culturally tolerant and know that their neighbours have different rules of conduct; for example the Tibetans forbid the marriage of aunt and nephew, but both they and the Nepali permit the marriage of first cousins which for the Lepchas is the most horrifying form of incest. The habits of other races, particularly the Tibetans, are a fairly constant subject of conversation; many of these habits are viewed with disgust, but disgust tempered by considerable amusement.

In the case of two or more marriages taking place within the same generation of two groups, the levirate and sororate claims are readjusted to meet the situation; for example if two brothers marry two sisters, the younger brother will not have the right of access to or be able to inherit his elder brother's wife, because she

[10] Instances of these disruptive situations are given further on in this chapter and in Chapter Fifteen.

[11] 'The relation of comradeship and peace in the we-group and that of hostility and war towards others-groups are correlative of each other.' W. Sumner: *Folkways* (Boston 1906), p. 12.

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proved to be jealous and possessive, and refused to allow her husband to sleep with Tafoor-mu. 595

Dunbi was the 'younger brother' (actually the son of a younger paternal uncle) of the Muktair; at the period when the second wife was brought home he was completely alone, for his parents, wife, and children had all died in a dysentery epidemic. The Muktair took him into his house, and there he so well consoled Tafoor-mu that she became pregnant. The Muktair thereupon offered her to Dunbi; he *asék*'d her with the symbolical gift of one pig, and the families separated. One year later the second wife died.

The position of Tafoor-mu is one of the saddest in Lingthem; formerly the wife of the most prosperous man in the neighbourhood, and with two prosperous sons, she is now married to the poorest and most feckless man in the village. She has borne him three daughters; the eldest is married away, the second lives with her half-brother, Tafoor—she is unbetrothed Prumtu, the girl with the squint—and the youngest is a child of six. Although Tafoor and Chudo give her occasional presents she lives and dresses poorly, and has to work hard to compensate for her husband's sloth. As far as I could observe, Tafoor and Chudo feel little love or respect for their unfortunate mother.

We in Europe make passionate and personal love one of the chief pivots round which our society moves; the Lepchas of Zongu have completely excluded it, and it is liable to be extremely disruptive when it does flare up. The normal emotional situation is one of reasonable affection founded on mutual rights and benefits; people love one another for statable and stated reasons. No love is considered automatic; it is not considered inevitable that parents should love their children nor brothers their brothers and sisters; it is merely considered probable, because their situations entail the mutual obligations on which love is supposed to rest. Unless people are strongly deviant Lepchas are chary of pronouncing judgement on their neighbours' characters; most people, they say, are much of a muchness. Consequently it is to be expected that arranged marriages will turn out well, unless one of the partners has a really bad character; since love is founded on mutual obligations and benefits, these mutual obligations can be set up between any two people. It is worth noting that all three men whose love stories are recounted above fall well outside the Lepcha norm. The Muktair was, it would appear, an exceptionally strong-willed and ambitious man, and his love affair started when he was living 152 581

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152 581 in foreign surroundings; also his second wife came from a mixed community. Katel and Aga on the other hand are both subnormal; they are foolish, suspicious and disliked.

152 831 For the Lepchas of Zongu sexual activity is practically divorced from emotion; it is a pleasant and amusing experience, and as much a necessity as food and drink; and like food and drink it does not matter from whom you receive it, as long as you get it; though you are naturally grateful to the people who provide you with either regularly. One of the most difficult of all concepts for the European to take into consideration is the non-European attitude to sexual activity; with us, explicitly on the part of men, sexual desirability is most intimately bound up with aesthetic considerations. Although there may be individual disagreement as to who are included in the terms, potential sexual partners are divided into the categories of 'attractive' and 'unattractive'; and we believe that only perverts or prostitutes will have anything to do with the second category. Primitive people, I believe, do not make this distinction; there is social kudos to be acquired from being the known possessor of a beautiful wife or mistress; but for temporary sexual gratification any willing partner is equally acceptable. I found it extremely difficult to accept the notion that most of the men with young and pretty wives at one time or another slept with the two sixty-year-old haridans who were the promiscuous women of Lingthem; but as far as I can make out their invitations were never refused.[13] Fourteen-year-old Chimpet gave a good illus-

[13] Professor Malinowski records a similar situation in the Trobriands in *The Sexual Life of Savages* (Routledge: London, 1929) page 247–8: 'The (medical officer) was once baffled by finding all the boys in a community afflicted with a very virulent and obviously recent gonorrhea, while all the women to be considered in this connection were as yet quite healthy. Finally he obtained a confession from one of his patients that he and his companions had copulated among others with a woman, so old, decrepit, and ugly, that the medical officer had thankfully and unhesitatingly omitted her in his several inspections. . . .' 'I was able to ascertain that the ugliest and most repulsive people have, not only sporadic but regular intercourse.' Professor Malinowski finds this notion so repulsive that he accounts for it 'by their manner of carrying out this physiological activity', which in the Trobriands may entail very slight physical contact. This explanation does not however hold good for the Lepchas; see Chapter Twelve, p. 330. I think primitives dissociate, in a way we cannot, the public attitudes of parading a desirable partner, and the private ones of physiological gratification. In this connection it is perhaps worth noting that in the Somerset village where I live potentially jealous situations arise in the case of people whom I personally would consider, either through age or ugliness, to be almost sexless.

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tion of the cultural attitude to sex when he said that he had 152
ice slept with a girl at Parfok, at her request, when he accom- 831
nied his father there to help perform religious ceremonies; he
oyed the experience and would willingly repeat it; but he does
t want to marry the girl because he does not like her.

It is permissible for a man who feels himself unable to cope with 595
field-work, either on account of physical weakness or because
has other work which takes him a great deal from the neighbour-
od, to invite an unmarried younger brother to live with him
to share his fields and wife. The co-husband is co-opted
hout any sort of ceremony, but thereafter he is no longer free
he choice of a wife of his own, if he desires one; he must make
request for a wife of the same *ptso* as the shared wife, exactly
f he was taking a second wife in the normal course of events.
e co-husbands sleep with their common wife on alternate nights, [843]
all the children are presumed to be begotten by the first husband,
he alone has to observe the pre-natal precautions; an exception
nly made to this rule if the first husband's prolonged absence
kes his paternity a physiological impossibility.

n the recent past there have only been two cases of such poly-
ry in Lingthem; one is that of Chala Mandal, described above,
o first shared and then gave his first two wives to a 'younger
ther'; the second is that of the second Dorjé Lapoon, who
red his wife with his real elder brother; this brother was a
a attached to another village who was almost always away, so
t the second Dorjé Lapoon had almost the exclusive use of his
red wife. It is not allowable for two unrelated men to share a
e, but two who call themselves 'brothers' may do so; unless
two men are closely related this is considered undesirable, as
liable to lead to quarrelling. There are some obvious advan-
es for a first husband in co-opting a second husband; it is an
y way to get rid of a wife of whom you are tired; it gives an
a adult worker and a care-taker for your property and wife
en you have to be absent. The position of second co-husband
the other hand seems to offer few attractions except to the poor
unambitious, under-sexed man, and it is understandable that
e are very few examples of such polyandry. In the event of [835]
yandry or polygyny the incest prohibition against sleeping with
r husband's younger brother, or your wife's elder sister, are
iously suspended.

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new element is however not of major importance; although religious titles are used in civil life no other distinction is made between layman and lamas; the social organisation is confined to the monastery. There is a difference in appearance between laymen and lamas; laymen wear their hair in a long plait whereas lamas have their heads shaved or at least close cropped; and though lamas often wear ordinary clothes for field work, on social occasions they always wear Tibetan, and not Lepcha dress. But lamas do not form a group within the society; the fact that a man is a lama is only one of the aspects of his personality, less important than his wealth or poverty, his industry or laziness, his relations by kin and marriage and friendship with other people. Only in their death are lamas given distinguishing treatment; they are usually cremated and never buried, whereas laymen are usually buried and never cremated; both laymen and lamas may, if the horoscope indicates it, be thrown into the river.

As a generalisation it may be said that the Lepchas have accepted the ritual, the validating mythology, and the organisation of lamaism; what they have completely refused to accept is the ethic. Like the other 'higher religions' lamaism is individualist; it holds that a person's chief concern should be with his own spiritual welfare. This, the key-concept of lamaism, was and is an alien attitude to the Lepchas. As has already been said, the Lepcha attitude to disapproved-of acts is social, and not individual; it is the society, and not the evil-doer, which bears the brunt of wicked acts. The Lepchas admit feelings of shame—feelings so strong that they can lead to suicide—following exteriorised social disapproval; they do not admit guilt-feelings. The more pious lamas and some laymen accept intellectually the idea of reincarnation, but they do not accept emotionally the idea of reincarnation being the result of personal acts. The form of reincarnation is discovered from horoscopes, and those depend on the time of birth or death, that is to say on chance, and not on individual behaviour. Sin is practically equated with the killing of animals; this is felt to be a dangerous act and is thoroughly congruent with the Lepchas' inhibition of aggression in other spheres of life. But the idea of asceticism, for example, being meritorious is so alien to the Lepchas, that even pious lamas have confided their private belief that the *gé-long* (as the monks who have taken their vows of asceticism are called) get their satisfactions on the sly.

I should like to suggest that this selective conversion to a new

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754 eye. On the other hand 'When Tang-li Mun sacrifice they do so
756 with benevolence in their heart towards the people and houses to which they are summoned.' It is thought that none of the Mun now inhabiting Lingthem are evil, though one lived there about a score of years ago; there are however some in other villages. The type of Mun a person becomes depends on his or her teacher, and not on the possessing spirit.

159 I think the best way of describing the possession and functions
756 of a Mun is to repeat the description of his spiritual life given by Gongyop. For the greater part I was not able to take down his exact words, for he speaks extremely quickly and very easily falls
[195] into the sing-song rhythm of a Mun's invocation, often saying the same thing twice or four times in different words, rather after the fashion of the Hebrew psalmist. He uses onomatopoeic words a great deal, many of his own invention. He has a prodigious memory and once started goes on like a clock-work machine; but if he is interrupted his train of thought breaks down and he cannot extract one point out of a sequence for elaboration.

Gongyop is far more in demand than any other Mun in the village; he officiates in nearly all the ceremonies except those which are performed in families of which a member is a Mun. When sacrificing he falls into what is almost a very light trance; his eyes become glazed and unfocussed as he intones his rhythmic chants. He is a man of forty-six, with a rather whimsical and wild-eyed expression and very small and expressive hands. He is easily amused and laughs freely. He is very nervous and jumps perceptibly at any sudden sound, a thing no other Lepcha does; he is aware of his peculiarity and ascribes it to a fall he had from a bamboo when he was thirteen. After that fall blood spurted from his ears and he couldn't see and for a time lay like one dead. Three years later he had another fall, but was not hurt much and climbed the tree again. Nowadays he says he can't climb big trees; if he were to do so he would feel giddy. Even in normal life he suffers from giddiness; 'his eyes turn' and he can't see properly. He can't walk along a cliff; the ground feels as though it were moving up and down, nor can he walk among big trees for he feels that they are going to fall on him. He has frequent unpleasant dreams of
● [152] falling down or flying down. I did not come across similar nervousness or anxiety among any of the other Lepchas whether Mun or laymen, and such instability is in no way essential for a Mun.

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(that is at a birth, certain moments in the marriage feast or at death) or in a house at which I was not welcome I would be told politely but firmly that I was not wanted.

My relationship with the Lepchas was, I thought, more intellectual than emotional; they quite liked and respected me, but did not feel about me at all. Consequently I was very surprised and moved when on my departure three of the people whom I had got to know best actually said goodbye to me with tears in their eyes and appeared genuinely sorry that I was leaving; this surprised me the more as Lepchas are not at all in the habit of dramatising emotions or situations; the only time I saw any of them cry was when two sisters broke into tears when a prayer-flag was set up in memory of a third sister who had recently died.

I do not think that my colour or appearance was the chief bar to emotional contact with the Lepchas; my habits were a more formidable obstacle, for I ate somewhat different foods, lived in a different way, and, above all was absurdly fussy about cleanliness, a completely meaningless concept to the Lepchas. But most important of all was the fact that I was alone, without wife or family or kin (it was generally believed that C. J. Morris was my father but for some obscure reason—probably because I was a bastard—we refused to acknowledge the relationship) and had no shared experiences with them; also, although present-giving on both sides was fairly constant, I naturally could not build up in the time a system of mutual benefits and obligations on which their own emotional relationships rest.

Present-giving forms a continual motive in Lepcha life. If you go as a guest to a feast you take a present with you, and you are given a present—usually some uncooked meat—to take away with you; if you go on a visit you take a present, and you are given a present on leave-taking. Casual visitors to another's house are always offered food and drink. Except for the formal gifts of *asék* and marriage these presents are really presents and not exchanges, except symbolically; it is a point of honour and gives a feeling of self-satisfaction to be able to give as good a gift as possible; and consequently when there is disproportion between the means of two people there is an equal disproportion between the gifts they give and receive.

I often found these gifts a subject of embarrassment, for the Lepchas would constantly try to overdo me in generosity, giving more than they could afford or I could want; particularly as

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a scene from their own past they describe it minutely and statically, as though they were looking at a picture. They frequently like to make their descriptions clearer by employing twigs or pebbles to represent the people and things described.

It is probable that the value which is placed on story-telling has greatly influenced the Lepcha tendency to monologue, to talk as it were in paragraphs, to which I have already referred; this tendency is noticeable even in the speeches put into the mouths of the characters of their stories. Stichomythia is only applied to jokes.

V

Besides being the greatest social diversion, speech is also the greatest social sanction. For through speech is produced the strongest unpleasant psychological sensation that the Lepchas recognise—shame; and shame is on occasion so unbearable that it leads to suicide.

The training and education of Lepchas from their earliest childhood stresses social approval and disapproval as the motive for adopting or abstaining from certain types of behaviour. A child is told that if he does certain acts—takes other people's property for example, or refuses to work—other people won't like him and won't help him. The emphasis is always on the disapproval of the community in general and not, as with us, on the losing the love of the parents, or the gods, or on the punishment by people in authority. It would seem (though without further evidence this is only a speculation) that this emphasis on anonymous social approval together with the fact that the extended family is a psychologically operative group, and that positive training takes place relatively late in the life of the child, has the result of producing a much weaker internalised control (or super-ego) than is the case when the approving and punishing mechanism is introjected in the image of the parents and parent-surrogates. It is also noteworthy that the Lepcha social organisation only renders possible identification with the community as a whole, and, though to a lesser extent, with the extended family; the Lepchas have not, as most European children and adults have, smaller groups in the community with whom they can identify, and whose approval will support them against the condemnation of another part of the community.

If this is an accurate representation of the case it would follow

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626 154 that the ego, though normally less disturbed, is also more vulnerable to attacks from without. The mechanisms of self-justification and self-criticism have been brought into play much less. When feelings of guilt are continuously evoked the ego acquires a capacity to deal with them more or less satisfactorily, and is able to balance the support of friendly objects against the actual or believed punishing tendencies of the hostile objects; but when the evocation of guilt feelings depends on exteriorised social disapproval, and when the community which expresses this disapproval is relatively tolerant without over-exacting standards, the occasions when the individual has to deal with such situations are very rare—indeed may never arise after childhood. Consequently the strength of [762] the negative feelings is enhanced by the fact that they are more or less novel; and if the extended family join the community in exteriorising their disapproval the shamed person has no moral support left; in psychoanalytical terminology the whole of the super-ego has turned against the ego and this will produce suicide.

● 152 The Lepchas describe shame as producing a very unpleasant physical sensation, chiefly located in the belly. When I was trying [673] to discover the Lepcha attitude to sin in the lamaist sense of the word, several people told me that the difference between sin and shame was that, although sin may possibly have some effect on your body or on your after-life, it does not affect you mentally nor do you feel anything in your belly when you commit a sin comparable to that which you would feel if you were reproached for doing your work badly. At one of the big monastery feasts a man from a neighbouring village informed me that turning one of the big prayer-wheels would remove a thousand sins. 'What are sins?' I asked him. 'Killing animals, thinking evil thoughts, doing evil deeds.' 'Do you mind killing animals?' 'No.' I then turned to the people standing around and asked them what sins were? The Mandal, speaking for the community said 'You had better ask a lama; we laymen don't know.' The majority agreed to this; but twelve-year-old Ribu standing by said that sin was killing animals; but it was no sin if the animals were, had been, or might have been eating your crops.

It is extremely easy to shame a person. For example one morning fourteen-year-old Chimpet arrived with an extremely dirty face, after I had made him a present of a cake of soap. I made fun of him in front of his father who joined in; whereupon he turned down his mouth, refused to speak and went and fidgeted with the monastery

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window with his back to us for a few minutes, before he went away looking quite different to his usual boisterous self. He did not return home till the evening. On another occasion Lumba's eldest son Kutt'r, aged nineteen, came up to have a wound on his hand dressed, after which he went to the kitchen to have a cup of tea. A little later I sent and asked him to come and talk to me and he sent back a reply that he didn't want to. A couple of days later he returned to have his hand dressed again, and I then asked him why he thought I would give him medicine when he would not come and talk to me? He was almost dumb with embarrassed shame and tried to slink away; I had to employ a good deal of tact before I could get him to accept the medicine. Had I made such a remark in front of witnesses it is quite possible that he would have tried to take poison.

Considering the size of the community suicide is fairly frequent among the Lepchas. There have been six suicides in Lingthem and the neighbouring smaller villages in the last twenty years, and in every case the suicide has been immediately subsequent to a public reproof. In five out of the six cases the suicides were relatively young men; the sixth case was that of a young girl of Panung who drowned herself because her uncle and parents reproved her for her laziness and promiscuity. Chélé's father killed himself because his wife and her family publicly blamed him for neglecting her and his work while she was ill. Kurma's uncle killed himself because he was blamed for not keeping his wife in order, and Kurma's brother because he was blamed for his uncle's suicide.[6] The possibility of suicide from grief is admitted, but the only case I heard of was of a woman in the neighbouring village of Lungdeum who killed herself shortly after the death of her husband, and the details of this case were not properly known. Women kill themselves by drowning, men usually with the aconite poison they use on their arrows.

Besides the successful suicides there have been a number of suicide attempts which have been thwarted. It seems to me probable that a Lepcha can establish his innocence on a specific charge by going through the gestures of committing suicide in such situations that he is bound to be saved; some stories of attempted suicide which I heard seemed to me not to have been intended seriously; they were theatrical performances arranged in such a manner as to convince everybody of the sincerity of the libelled person without

[6] See Part Three for fuller details, Chapter Fifteen, p. 396–397.

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186 The Lepchas are remarkably tolerant. They are perfectly ready to admit the validity for other peoples of habits and customs which for them would be shocking or disgusting. For example the marriage arrangements of the Nepali, and some of the sexual habits of the Tibetans would be horrifying and disastrous if committed by Lepchas; the Lepchas know of these habits, and are inclined to laugh at them; but they do not reproach the Nepali or Tibetans for them, do not try and convince them that they are wrong, and do not fear moral contamination through contact with them. This tolerance is not accompanied however by any feelings of inferiority; the very strong sentiment of fundamental equality among individuals is carried over to a sentiment of fundamental equality between groups. Some people are richer, more industrious or cleverer than their neighbours; similarly the Tibetans are more learned and the Europeans richer than the Lepchas; but since the Lepchas are as learned and as rich as they can be, they do not, I think, feel any fundamental inferiority in comparison with more favoured groups, any more than they do in comparison with more favoured individuals. It is worth remembering in this connection how Gongyop in his prophetic dreams under the possession of Padem *rum* would visit the rulers of neighbouring states and Europeans and would be treated by them as an equal. It is noteworthy that the richer households and the learned lamas who can read do not, [554] except when the lamas are performing their special functions, demand or obtain any special preferential treatment.

[152] This tolerance of the Lepchas can be ascribed I think partly to contentment, and partly to indifference. Straightforward consumption—food, drink and sex—fills the forefront of their desires and aims in life; provided these physical needs are satisfied—and for the majority they are continuously satisfied—the other aspects of life are emotionally of less importance. In their dealings with the supernatural they are particularly tolerant and receptive; it is important to be able to deal with the devils but they have not any deep-set preference for one special method of dealing with them. Completely alien methods will be tried, and, if they prove satisfactory, adopted, however little they may be integrated into their general outlook; thus they have accepted the taboo on menstruating women in the treatment of cardamum, and retained the insistence on virginity in the sacrifices to the people of Mayel, though except in these instances virginity is a meaningless concept and menstruating women suffer under no disabilities. This capacity of accepting

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produces the result that most Lepchas have two types of behaviour; they are far more restrained in public and with strangers than they are in the privacy of their own homes. I was naturally never able to observe this, but in people's stories of their own lives there was a constant undercurrent of grumbling and scolding, particularly on the part of the women.[8] Sometimes these undercurrents came fairly near the surface in public in the guise of playful teasing. Public quarrelling of any sort is so violently disapproved of that even minor irritations and annoyances have to be repressed in public; in the home there is not the same social restraint and I have the impression that the majority of wives are given to nagging on occasion. It must be remembered that most wives are strangers to their husband's community and therefore lack the moral and emotional support of their families which is always available for the majority of the men.

The pace of Lepcha life is very leisurely; the Lepchas are never in a hurry. When they are doing something, be it work or pleasure, they like to do it thoroughly. With work as with pleasure there is no hurry or greed; everything gets done eventually, but it gets done slowly, with intervals of rest in between. The Lepchas never seem to mind waiting; often after everybody has gathered for a religious ceremony there will be a delay of several hours, while the lamas prepare the ritual objects; nobody objects to this or thinks to hurry another up; they are content to sit and wait until everything is ready. When a piece of communal work such as the repairing of a house or the building of a bridge is in progress only about half the people present are likely to be working at any one time; the others will be taking a rest, or joking, or helping to prepare the evening meal. The Lepchas work very long hours and do not grudge their labour; but they detest being ordered about and see no sense in hurry; work is a disagreeable necessity which should be made as pleasant as possible. A few state that they feel happiest after a good day's work; but for the majority the reason for work is to provide for the sensual pleasures which form the chief object of life.

Although Lepchas do not allow for quarrelling they admit bad temper to be natural, particularly if a person is hungry or if he is finding difficulties in his work. The expression of bad temper is stylised; it is called *shadong ding* and is externalised by the annoyed person breaking any of his own property which comes to hand, or

[8] Numerous examples of this occur in Book Three.

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by his hacking at a piece of wood with his knife, or by throwing stones. Even in this state nobody would destroy another's property, and only a savage foreigner like Tempa would hit or throw stones at people; but on occasion people might hit animals, or throw things at them. Normally people only beat animals if they stray into cultivated land; to hit them on any other occasion is considered cruel. *Shadong ding* is considered to be a natural and almost automatic state, like hunger; it is not caused by a supernatural and no notice is paid to a person in a temper.

Except for shame, hunger and sexual desire the Lepchas do not equate physical sensations and emotional states. Neither blushing nor fainting for emotional reasons are recognised. Squeamishness varies considerably with the individual. Some people are frightened of corpses; the Mandal was unwilling to approach the dead bodies of his first wife and of his parents. A few, such as Pembu, cannot even bear to watch a wound being dressed. Such squeamishness is considered rather stupid; and a certain admiration is expressed for those people who have the courage to rip open the corpse of a pregnant woman, and take out the foetus, which has to be done before the body is disposed of. A queasy person is not made fun of nor considered disgraced by his sensitiveness; but some admiration is felt for those people who do not manifest it, rather similar to the European admiration for a person with 'plenty of guts'.

The disgust reactions of the Lepchas are remarkably low. They will not avoid walking in human or animal excrement and will merely rub their feet on the grass if they should do so. People will clean babies often with their bare hands; and I have seen women collect the mucus from a baby with whooping cough in their hands and just rub them on the ground. They have no disgust for menstruation though they have some fear of it; if the menstrual blood falls into food or water it would be fatal to humans or animals though it nourishes fishes; a menstruating woman is not debarred from any action. After menstruation a woman will always wash both her body and her clothes, a thing which Tibetans neglect to do; the Lepchas consider, and correctly, that the Tibetans are far dirtier than they, and a number of anecdotes are told about the Tibetan lack of attention to their bodies and their various filthy, but to the Lepchas amusing, personal habits. The Lepchas themselves are extremely dirty on the whole and particularly the laymen; lamas shave and wash their heads and also their hands before making

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857 The only times she appeared happy were when somebody would give her a baby to nurse. She was always begging mothers to let her hold their children; the request was comparatively seldom granted; when it was she was completely happy for a few minutes. The adults thought my playing with children, or indeed taking any notice of them, extremely eccentric; they were, however, quite amiable about it.

869 776 [861] 152 Even before they attain to physical independence Lepcha children know about devils, and nearly all their fears are centred round them. They are quite unscrupulously threatened with devils whenever they are naughty. The bogies which particularly frighten children depend partly on individual choice and partly on the emphasis given by elders. The childish ghost-devil num-een *moong* is feared by all children, and a great number claim to have heard it moaning; other favourite bogies are Tong-ryong *moong*, who looks like a tiger and runs after and kills people, Mi-toor, the unkillable dog, and other theriomorphic devils. As far as I can make out these fears are not obsessive; for one thing they are shared by every member of the community, and hand-in-hand with the idea of devils is learnt the capacity of the priests of the two religions to deal with them. The idea of devils is most frightening if a child is alone in the forest by day, or alone in the house by night; everybody is rather frightened of devils in the forest after nightfall. It very rarely happens that a child is left alone at night; and children are not frightened of the dark in their own homes (except sometimes very young ones) for they always sleep in practically complete darkness. If a child alone in the forest thinks he sees or hears a devil his only course is to run home as soon as possible.

Open fear of devils is considered a childish trait, and a person claiming to be considered as an adult will deny fearing them any more. The chief sign of a child overcoming what is considered to be its excessive fear of devils is when it voluntarily throws away its necklace with the attached snail-shells and sloughed navel-string which acts as a sort of amulet. No pressure is put upon children either to make them retain the necklace or to throw it away. Chudo's eldest daughter, aged seven, who had had her sickle several years, still wore her necklace, while her four-year-old younger brother had already thrown his away.

When I asked fourteen-year-old Chimpet if he was frightened of devils he shouted 'No' in a very loud voice; if he saw one, he said, he would throw stones at it and drive it away. He admitted

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that when he was younger he had been a little frightened; nowadays if his baby sisters cry he tells them that a devil will come and take them, and they stop at once. By the house of his lamaist instructor at Purfong there was a big tree which was the home of Jamfi *moong*. One evening this devil leant over the roof of the house, black and high as the sky; his teacher burnt a bunch of herbs and smoked a cigarette at it, whereupon it took itself off to the forest, whistling as it went. The visit of this devil did not produce any untoward results, but Chimpet admitted that at the time he was a little frightened.

Besides devils most children are frightened of houses in which there has been a recent death and of burial- or burning-places, and will usually run past them as quickly as they can. This fear persists as a motive for panic longer than the fear of meeting incarnated devils; thus twenty-two-year-old Rigya, after saying that as a child he used to run away from such places, later admitted that it was only in the last year that he was able to walk by them at an ordinary pace. Nearly all adults have a certain fear of devils when alone in the deep forest or on high mountains; and alone in the forest everybody is frightened of snakes and wild beasts; but these fears are perfectly rational; people are still occasionally poisoned by snakes and mauled by bears.

It sometimes happens that smaller children will be bullied by older ones; but this is rare, and if it does occur the children will be rescued either by their parents or elder brothers or by any adults present and the bullies will be well punished. As with other Lepcha relationships, love between siblings is not considered automatic; it is usual however, and there is a cultural expectation that elder brothers and sisters will instruct, help and protect their younger siblings who out of gratitude will love them in return.

Those children who are going to become lamas usually start to learn to read about the age of twelve; but here too there is no definite rule, and instruction may start three or four years earlier or later. Lepchas under instruction appear to regard their lessons as an unpleasant piece of extra work, only made tolerable by the hope of easy gain in the future. Except for future lamas or carpenters Lepchas appear to have finished most of their formal education by about the age of twelve. Children of that age could usually identify for me as many plants and trees as their elders; children under ten usually knew very few.

Very few children have an alternative home to go to if they feel

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591 unhappy in their own; near paternal relations usually live in the same house, and maternal relations generally live far away. If, however, there is living in the neighbourhood a maternal grandfather or married aunt children can always go and pay them short visits. Thus Chimpet, who was not very happy at home and who was rather neglected in favour of the numerous younger children, used to go fairly frequently to visit his maternal grandfather, the Lharibu Chujen at the next village of Panung; sometimes he would go by invitation, either alone or with other members of his family, and at other times he would run away there of his own accord for a few days; no comment was raised if he did so. There are, however, very few children who have such an alternative home.

152 Only and adopted children are often very lonely, but except for these it is I think extremely rare for a child to be actively unhappy at home. The girl Prumtu was the only really unhappy child in Lingthem; after her perhaps came Chélé, who has been discussed earlier;[9] he lived alone with his old grandfather and a distantly related middle-aged woman. Besides Chélé, Pursang, Chanò's second son who was for so long suckled by his aunt, occasionally threatens suicide; he has no obvious reasons for being unhappy but he is a rather difficult character, and shows some signs of turning into a bad boy, a *tané*.

858 For the majority of Lepchas childhood is not an actively unhappy time, but a time of obscurity, of being unimportant; children are not taken much notice of and their tastes are little consulted. But most of the children realise, though perhaps they would not enunciate it so clearly as their parents, that the obscurity and occasional harshness of these earlier years are a necessary preliminary and training for the wholly desirable goal of full adult status.

[9] See Chapter Six, p. 164–165.

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person who dismantled it would have to provide a new one. If a person were to pull down a prayer-flag maliciously or in order to get the cloth (such a case occurred about twenty years ago) he would be fined Rs. 15.

A year after the death some more Mani prayer-flags are set up, and on that day a memorial ceremony called *lun-juk* is performed by lamas. This ceremony is held in the house where the deceased died; a Dorjé Lapoon must be present to read the proper books, a *kané* to play the musical instruments, and nuns to turn their prayer-wheels. Between a hundred and three hundred *chimi* are lit for this ceremony; since few people possess so many they borrow the lights either from neighbours or from the monastery; in the latter case they give a present of butter or oil in return. All the relations of the dead person should be present; but, if the deceased was a woman who had married a long way from her home, at least one representative of her family must be there, preferably her elder brother, or failing that her father or her uncle. After the performance of this ceremony the surviving partner, if the deceased was married, is free to marry again.

The Lepchas have formalised mourning very little. Until the *sanglion* members of the deceased's household wear rough old clothes and do not wash their hair; after that it is said that you can only distinguish a mourner by his sad face. People in mourning have to observe certain prohibitions. Any married person in any way connected with the dead man may not sleep with his spouse for three days after death, or until the corpse is disposed of, whichever period is the longer. If a spouse or parent or biological sibling dies the survivors are debarred for a year from marrying, or acting as *bek-bu* for another, or putting butter on sacrificial cups, or singing; during the period of mourning tables are never put in front of mourners, but always at the side. For affinal or classificatory relations these prohibitions are observed for forty-nine days.

Although the Lepchas do not dramatise their grief at the death of a near relation or friend their grief would appear to be sincere and deeply felt. The only time I saw a Lepcha cry was on the occasion of the erection of a prayer-flag in memory of the mother of the Mandal of Lungdeum, twenty-one days after her death. Two of her sisters had married men of Lingthem and were present at the ceremony; and as the flag was finally hoisted they burst into tears. There was no exhibition of grief; the women turned their backs on the rest of the company and cried quietly; when the

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765 mourners dispersed they wiped their eyes and appeared soon after
152 to be in normal spirits. It seemed almost as though they were trying to hide their grief.

761 All the elaborate ceremonies which I have described are per-
764 formed to get rid of the dead; the dead are terrifying and should be feared, not loved. Death has no consolations.

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157 a lot, but very slyly; thus when in her presence he was explaining
159 to us the way marriage horoscopes are cast he pointed out with considerable emphasis that the books foretold without any question that she would die young, very many years before he did.[6]

The most general excessive quality among the Lepchas, particularly the men, is excessive timidity; thus Chano, Gongyop and his son, Pembu, Jiroong and Nahyeun were all timid to a point where this timidity became an active disability. The Lepcha ideal calls for a very gradual emergence of responsibility, but it does call for it, and these people gave the impression of being permanently fixed in the dependent stage. Thus Pembu, who should have been running his own household, was almost entirely dependent on his mother for advice and help, Jiroong on his wife. Others fall short of the Lepcha ideal personality by lack of intelligence or industry; among these were Katel, Dunbi, Ashyok, and Aga. Of these Dunbi was temperamentally lazy and the other three were foolish and incompetent by the standards of the culture. Tobgé, and to a lesser extent Dadool, exceeded the Lepcha bounds of irresponsibility and licentiousness permitted to young men.

Among the younger men Rigya, who was born in 1915, to a certain extent aided and abetted by his adoptive elder brother Nariya, was unique in being an active miser. He was always shabbily dressed, and unlike all the other Lepchas, never made us presents, though he spent a great deal of time hanging round us, gaping at our possessions, and asking for presents; he had particularly a magpie desire for illustrated papers, and was always asking for pictures of war 'because he had never seen anything like them and was amazed'. He was given quite a number of papers, but one day I told him he could not have any more because other people wanted them. (One of the very few times I saw a [152] Lepcha boy cry was on one occasion when two mothers each accompanied with sons about eight years old came up for medicine; one of the boys asked for a paper and I gave it to him and went on dressing the cut; the mother of the other child asked rather timidly if I had not a paper for her boy as well, and I then saw this latter holding his mother's hand, with tears streaming down his face; he was crying hard but so quietly that I had not realised it though I was a couple of yards away.) A couple of days after I had refused to give Rigya any more papers he arrived early one morning to repeat his demand, bringing with him as a present the smallest

[6] See Appendix III, b.

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[52]
[732]

Above: DADOOL AND RIGYA (IN HAT)
Below: KANDEN AND CHIMPET. CHIMPET IS LAUGHING SO MUCH THAT HE IS NEARLY IN TEARS; KANDEN SMILES SECRETIVELY

[facing p. 368]

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

offensive and defensive warfare; whether they develop this form of social behaviour would appear to depend to a great extent on the density of population in a given area. When agriculture has developed so far that one man's labour can produce sufficient food for more than the labourer (and his immediate dependents) slave-raiding becomes an economic proposition.

So far we have been considering aggression in its purely destructive aspect of fighting, competition and destruction. But I think that is far too narrow a definition of the term and that destruction and rivalry are only two of the aspects of aggression. I should like to suggest that aggression should be defined as one aspect of *the urge to obtain mastery over the environment*; this urge is universal, but the strength with which it is manifested depends on the individual temperament, and the forms its overt expression takes depend partly on the material circumstances and partly on the social organisation in which the individual is born. Aggression or mastery can be manifested towards objects and ideas (the supernatural, for example) as well as towards people, and it can be constructive or destructive; there is as much release of aggression in building or creating as in destroying.

121 With this wider definition of aggression Sumner's hypothesis that each society (or rather the individuals composing it) have to 152 externalise a certain amount of aggression takes on an added validity; but his 'other-groups' must be redefined to mean the external world and the supernatural, and not merely members of other societies. I should like to suggest the generalisation that the amount of destructive aggression manifested towards other men in primtiive societies is negatively correlated with the difficulty of maintaining life in the given physical environment or social organisation. In other words the harder the environment and the less material development there is, the less will destructive aggression be overtly manifested. Socially allowed destructive aggression is the product of economic security and leisure. If I am correct in this statement the type picture of the earliest men as uninhibitedly destructive and jealous until they were made tolerant, will have to be changed to that of hard-working and generally socially unaggressive men developing jealousy and fighting as they acquired control over their food supply and the dangerous animals in the environment. If this statement is correct the Lepchas' failure to develop any pattern of external aggression may be considered to have been conditioned by their isolation, their low material development, and the difficulties

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

of wresting a livelihood from their environment. It would seem probable also that the environment has been responsible for keeping the operative social group a small one and in that respect may have been a reinforcing cause of the Lepchas' failure to develop towards feudalism. The small local and kinship group is now firmly implanted in Lepcha culture and it is interesting to note how, under contemporary settled conditions, the Lepchas still oppose all attempts to weld them into bigger units; their treatment of the new office of Muktair,[8] even though it was created by the powerful Court, is extremely illuminating.

V

The reasons given above for the Lepchas' lack of destructive aggression outside their group may be adequate; the lack of aggression inside the group cannot be explained in such general terms. It is possible that since, in their major occupation of getting food, the Lepchas felt themselves more opposed by natural phenomena (personified into supernatural forces) than by other men, they to a certain extent carried the same attitude into their social life and regarded the supernatural, and not their fellows, as their chief cause for discontent. From the common-sense point of view it could be argued, as Sumner suggests, that in the small groups of which Lepcha society was composed the value of each individual worker was so great to the group as a whole that all potentially aggressive situations whereby the group might be threatened with the loss of the worker had to be avoided. Unfortunately it cannot be assumed of any human group that they act on common-sense reasons.

Though the reasons for the Lepchas' almost complete suppression of destructive aggression within their group would appear to be impossible to discover, it may be worth while noting their methods of doing so. This suppression of aggression can be viewed from two aspects: there are the social rules for its control, and there is the treatment of the new recruits to the society, the babies. From the social point of view, the most obvious is their strong social sanction against quarrelling; the Lepchas have not admitted a single situation in which quarrelling or vengeance-seeking is permissible. This may be regarded as a legal sanction against quarrelling. Next in importance from the legal point of view is the social arrangement of all sexual relationships so as to exclude jealousy. These arrangements have been detailed in Chapter Six but

[8] See Chapter Five, pp. 123–126.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

121 may be briefly recapitulated. Parents have no rôle in the sexual life
152 of their children; exclusive sexual possession is legally impossible; the younger are favoured against the elder (since they have access to their elders' spouses) and the elder are prevented from overbearing the younger by the equation of 'younger siblings' ' spouses with children-in-law. Although nowadays not fully employed they have the legal device of repairing unsatisfactory marriages without the enmity of the two groups involved by exchanging the unsatisfactory spouse for another member of the same group.

In the Lepcha treatment of young children there seem to me to be two constant stresses of almost equal importance for the avoidance of overt aggression. One of these stresses has been already fully documented in Chapter Eleven; it is the immediate and willing satisfaction of all the infant's expressed physical desires. Save under exceptional circumstances, or through illness, the Lepcha infant does not apparently suffer to any appreciable extent from hunger, discomfort or cold. From the point of view of physical well-being Lepcha babies appear to experience the minimum of frustration and therefore it would seem that in the first months of life there are few experiences to evoke aggression. But parallel with this gratification of physiological appetites there is the considerable physical restraint which the babies endure through passing the majority of their waking hours firmly tied to the back of their guardian, and also the complete lack of encouragement which their elders give to the babies' earlier self-maximating activities and attempts to acquire body techniques and physical independence. Young babies get no social approval from their attempts to crawl and walk; on the contrary a mobile baby is more likely to be picked up and replaced on its guardian's back, since it is there easier to control. The two methods by which babies in our society would appear to win adult approval in their second year are successful sphincter control and the acquirement of body techniques and speech. Sphincter control is paid little attention to by adult Lepchas until a considerably later age, and attempts at acquiring body techniques are met with, at the best, indifference. Very young the Lepcha baby learns that social approval is to be obtained, not by self-assertion, but by passivity. The baby's self-maximating efforts are not actively punished, but they are discouraged by indifference; its passivity and conformity are constantly rewarded.

I think it is legitimate to trace a connection between this partial extinction of self-assertion in early childhood and the adult Lepcha's

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

tendency to judge their fellows in their rôle of members of society, and not as personalities. This impersonal attitude to their fellows seems to me the chief operative factor for the suppression of competition and aggression in adult life. The Lepchas stress constantly social behaviour and minimise individual character variations. They stress the resemblance between individuals, they minimise their differences. This constant stress on the resemblance of individuals obviously makes for a low development of the ego, a lack of internal competition, a lack of contrast. The Lepchas minimise the most obvious contrasts, between rich and poor, between men and women, between lamas and illiterate laymen, to a great extent between adults and children. They recognise no social goals which can only be achieved at the expense of others, they have no social situations which separate rights and duties.

Although, as I have shown, this lack of personal aggression is dysgenic in the Lepchas' state of social development, the excess of personal and national aggression appears to be equally dysgenic in our own state of social development. To minimise this aggression will it be necessary for us too to view our neighbours impersonally, to tone down all the contrasts in personality, talent and achievement which have resulted in the greatest glories as well as the greatest horrors of our society? Or is there another solution?

[p. 452 is blank]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

these is jealousy. The first thing to determine is the biological status of jealousy. Is it an inherent, instinctive, irremovable impulse of the normal healthy human mind? Or is it the fruit of a convention which can be changed? No change in convention is going to remove the hunger problem, or even the more sublimable sex problem. Does jealousy rank with these? The answer is, yes and no. I believe that nine-tenths of all jealousy manifested by wives and by husbands and by lovers is but a conventional perversion of the instinct of fear; and this fear arises from the taking for granted of the monogamic tradition, as though it were in accordance with instinct and with right. Yet monogamy, except during those short periods of 'being in love,' is, for live people, the merest convention."

Having myself grown up in a culture in which jealousy is closely connected with sex and marriage I found it difficult at first to realise that this feeling is definitely not "an inherent, instinctive, irremovable impulse of the normal healthy mind." And yet there is little doubt that this is the case. It may be argued that the evidence from a single primitive tribe is no evidence at all, but this is tantamount to saying that ethnology has no practical value. It should be remembered, however, that since our own society has grown so complicated it is only in the examination of primitive peoples that we have any suitable laboratory material for the study of these urgent social problems. Most so-called primitive societies live relatively simple and uncomplicated lives; and by confining ourselves to a small and self-contained community it is still possible to watch the behaviour of the individual in the group, and, conversely, to see what reaction the group has on him.

578 It would not be difficult to make out a case proving that
● 152 jealousy is inherent in any capitalist society. It is true that the Lepchas are a good example of primitive socialism, but we are here not concerned with that side of the question. The point is that these people have realised that in the conditions in which they live sexual jealousy would make life

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intolerable, and in the course of countless generations they have so conditioned their feelings that this particular emotion never arises: or if it really is an inherent instinct, then they have sublimated it to such an extent that it causes no psychological disturbance.

Although the question of sexual jealousy hardly arises, it would be absurd to suppose that any man, even a Lepcha, is completely indifferent to his wife's promiscuity. For this reason, in Chodu's words: "It is better to copulate with one's sister-in-law out in the forest, because there is no privacy in the home. Out in the forest it is possible to be more passionate, whereas in the presence of others a certain amount of restraint must be exercised." An elder brother will be angry if he actually sees his younger brother copulating with his wife, and will say some such thing as: "Look here, you should not do that sort of thing with my wife while I'm about, and certainly not in my presence"; but apart from this he will take no action.

It is said that when a man habitually sleeps with his elder brother's wife the latter is liable to suffer from stomach-ache and diarrhœa, especially towards the end of each Tibetan month. When a man has pains of this sort he will naturally suspect his wife, but there is really little that he can do. He may suggest to his wife that she breaks off relations with his brother, or can ask her to obtain a piece of his clothing. If he wears this himself, in the form of a charm, it will be found that the pair will cease to be interested in one another and in course of time will give up sleeping together. It should be clearly noted, however, that the object of this is to cure the elder brother's stomach-ache and not to stop the woman having sexual relations with her husband's brother, to which no objection is taken.

It is an understood thing that most normal men do have relations with their elder brothers' wives from time to time, and while the subject is not generally discussed among brothers no one would make any attempt to deny the fact if asked; not because there is any question of jealousy arising,

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but because the matter is of such ordinary occurrence as not to merit discussion. With regard to affairs outside the immediate family circle slightly more circumspection is necessary; but only then in the case of a young unmarried girl. Tobgay, for instance, was well aware that his wife was carrying on an affair with Dadool, in spite of the fact that the latter already had a wife of his own. In this particular case the affair was being prosecuted actually inside the house, and sometimes in Tobgay's presence; but, as he himself said: "It is not good manners to pay attention to what goes on in the room once the lights have been put out." In any case he was himself in the habit of visiting other girls in the village.

I hope that I have now made it clear that among the Lepchas sexual jealousy does not exist. During our stay in Lingtem there was not the slightest sign of a quarrel over a woman, and the people thought it laughable that such a thing could happen. There is, however, another side to the question and, from our point of view, rather an important one. It is this: is it possible for real love to exist in a society which has completely sublimated sexual jealousy? I do not think it is. A distinction must, however, be drawn between "loving" and "being in love." Most people will agree with Dr. Roberts that "all of us who have passed through the first three or four decades of our life must have found by personal experience, first of all, that 'being in love' is the most exalted of human experiences; secondly, that this period of exaltation is limited in time—lasting, it may be for a few weeks, it may be for a few months, but rarely extending into years. Loving is one thing; 'being in love' is another. The latter is characterised by exclusiveness—exclusive individual devotion, on the one hand, and a desire for exclusive 'possession' on the other; so that it is hardly possible for any but the most complacent to be passionately in love without experiencing many painful pangs of jealousy. It is the essential insecurity of the relation that explains the hunger for the security and permanence which exclusive possession alone seems to promise."

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is received. If the teacher is a black magician, he teaches the black arts. It therefore has nothing to do with the Mun spirit who would be from the very beginning an evil being. This entirely contradicts the ancient tradition of the Mun and the Bong-thing who were established as mediators between God and men and as the protectors of men against the machinations of the demons. To this date the Mun and the Bong-thing have preserved these old traditions.[58]

The spirits of the Mun and the Bong-thing do not always live in their mediums, but they stay in a place called Tiamtan, as we learned above. They come down from there only when they are summoned. They take complete possession of their mediums only two or three times each year, particularly at the time of the festivals of the great sacrifices. At other times the mediums do not fall into a total trance. As we did not have the opportunity of observing such a trance personally, we repeat the description as given by Gorer, "When they come down, the vessel which receives them feels as though bowed down by a heavy weight.

The Moon only takes possession of this vessel twice a year, once in the hot season, and once in the wet season. This is a big ceremony and elaborate sacrifices are made. The day before the sacrifices I start feeling ill ; I feel heavy and pressed down and cannot bear any noise. I tremble constantly and I am covered with sweat. I pray to the gods to let me off, and I offer the chi and incense in preparation for them to wait for the true sacrifices. The next day the ceremony is held inside a house and many people are present. I sit down cross-legged in front of the offerings. Besides the ordinary offerings there is a wreath of flowers and a flower bedecked stick. When I sit opposite these I feel a heavy burden pressed over my shoulders and as if my flesh is being poked with sticks—zinga-zinga-zinga-zinga ; suddenly a sort of darkness comes over my eyes, it is as if I was in a sort of dream so that I know, see and remember nothing. But from what other people have told me and from what I have seen when other Mun have prophesied I know what takes place ; I put on the flower necklace and take up the stick and go and

58. Cfr. Gorer, op. cit. p. 220 sq.

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in Tibet also, the Mongoloids are farmers. In the regions of North-West China, in Tsing-hai and Kan-su, we found that in many Chinese, living there, the Mongoloid element was completely lacking or present in a very negligible manner. These people are also of a larger build ; they have the long, high-bridged noses, the long narrow faces and in many cases the Mongolian fold is not to be found. One might object that this was due to the influence of non-Mongoloid peoples like the Tibetans and the Turks who repeatedly overran these districts and ruled over the people for long periods of time. We shall refer later to the Mongoloids in China. At this stage it can be said that in China, the pure Mongoloids came from the farming inhabitants in Eastern and Central China as we have proved in the first chapter. One cannot quote the Mongols as counter evidence, as they are a very mixed and younger culture with strong agricultural influences.

We shall not deal in a detailed manner with the customs and habits of the Lepchas at birth, betrothal, marriage, death and burial. There is only one more point which I should like to touch upon : the judging of the Lepchas through the descriptions of European authors like Gorer and C.J. Morris. The two authors describe these people as being dominated by a strong, a very strong, sex complex. J. H. Hutton remarks in his foreword to Gorer's book, "Another aspect of Lepcha life which is almost as striking as the absence of aggression, is the apparent obsession of the whole community with sex. I was tempted to suppose that the author of this book had overemphasised the Lepchas' attitude to sex through an unconscious dramatisation, a journalistic dramatisation, if I may call it so, of a want of reticence on sexual matters of all kinds in a degree quite unfamiliar in his own society. The perusal, however, of Mr. Morris's book shows that I did Mr. Gorer an injustice. At the same time I am rather inclined to feel that the apparent preoccupation of the Lepchas with sex does not necessarily imply that the importance attached to it by them in their lives is proportionately theatrical. One is inclined to wonder whether this consciousness of sex is the cause or the result of the Lepchas' declining population, a decline of which the Lepchas are acutely aware. Probably, if there is any such connection at all it is by now a vicious